

## La Salle University La Salle University Digital Commons

---

Art Museum Exhibition Catalogues

La Salle University Art Museum

---

10-1988

# Kathe Kollwitz (1867-1945)

La Salle University Art Museum

Caroline Wistar

Follow this and additional works at: [http://digitalcommons.lasalle.edu/exhibition\\_catalogues](http://digitalcommons.lasalle.edu/exhibition_catalogues)



Part of the [Fine Arts Commons](#), and the [History of Art, Architecture, and Archaeology Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

La Salle University Art Museum and Wistar, Caroline, "Kathe Kollwitz (1867-1945)" (1988). *Art Museum Exhibition Catalogues*. 59.  
[http://digitalcommons.lasalle.edu/exhibition\\_catalogues/59](http://digitalcommons.lasalle.edu/exhibition_catalogues/59)

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the La Salle University Art Museum at La Salle University Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Art Museum Exhibition Catalogues by an authorized administrator of La Salle University Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [careyc@lasalle.edu](mailto:careyc@lasalle.edu).

Selected Works  
of  
Käthe Kollwitz  
in Celebration of Women  
in the Arts and Social  
Justice Weeks

**La Salle University Art Museum**

October 10 – November 20, 1988

## KÄTHE KOLLWITZ (1867-1945)

She was a woman artist of international stature, a wife, devoted mother of two sons, and an art professor who strove always to combat the social injustices so abundant in her lifetime. All of these roles she undertook with grace but without fanfare. And her artistic renditions transcended the particular and took on a universal significance with which we can easily identify today.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century (the period of Kollwitz's artistic development), women artists were just beginning to emerge from four hundred years of relative subservience. Despite little public encouragement and even some official derision, Kollwitz quietly and deliberately pursued her career during a turbulent and tragically disturbing period in German history.

Although raised in moderately well-to-do circumstances, Kollwitz's compassion for the underprivileged working class was nurtured by members of her politically enlightened and morally idealistic family. Her grandfather and father were especially active in promoting democratic values during the autocratic rule of the Prussian regime, while her doctor-husband, who shared equally Kollwitz's concern for the poor, chose to run a clinic for the working class in the slums of north Berlin.

In addition to the oppressions of the Prussian Empire, Kollwitz's work was especially affected by the general poverty, suffering, death and destruction which enveloped Germany during World War I (when her son was killed), the Weimar Republic, Hitler's Nazi regime, and World War II (when her grandson was killed).

While maturing and developing her work under these tragic circumstances, Kollwitz was further inspired by the social compassion of such well-known literary figures as Gorki, Dostoevski, Ibsen, Zola and especially by the German dramatist, Gerhart Hauptmann. A few of the artists who influenced the style and content of her work were Max

Klinger, Ernst Barlach and Auguste Rodin.

In 1885 Kollwitz attended the School for Female Artists in Berlin and in 1919 she became the first woman elected to the Berlin Academy of Art where she was later made Professor and given a free studio. She remained at the Academy until she was forced to resign by the Nazis in 1933. It should be noted here that Kollwitz throughout her life advocated an artistic education for women on an equal basis with men.

In spite of Kollwitz's progressive stance and her support of the Socialist party, she was not a political activist or a vocal expositor of causes. She chose to make known her beliefs primarily through her art. With quiet observation, reflection, and preliminary drawing, she delineated her favorite subject: the power and compassion of woman. And nowhere was this concern more forcefully shaped than in her images of motherhood, especially the working class mother as constant nurturer, provider, and protector of children from the savage brutalities of war and its resulting deprivations. Often, especially in her early works, the role of woman as active participant and even motivator of social protest movements was frequently stressed. The constant feature in most of these images was the resilience and tenacity of the mother in the face of hardship, offering a powerful suggestion of the great potential of woman to reform the inhuman conditions that plague the world.

The dominant medium for Kollwitz's work was the print. She produced only a few pieces of sculpture but executed over two-hundred-and-seventy etchings, woodcuts and lithographs, often experimenting and combining a number of print techniques.

Although this exhibition includes only a handful of Kollwitz's works, we hope it will give the viewer insight into the contribution of a remarkable woman artist and her commitment to humanitarian values. Her achievements may be considered exemplary for her time as well as ours, balancing a family and professional life despite personal tragedy and political upheaval. We are reminded, too, that the social injustices she exposed are too often witnessed at a distance from which we remain, unfortunately, altogether detached.

*Caroline Wistar*  
*Curator*

## SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Hinz, Renata (Ed.), Lippard, Lucy R. (Foreword), *Käthe Kollwitz: Graphics, Posters, Drawings*. Translated From the German by Rita and Robert Kimber. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981)
2. Kearns, Martha, *Käthe Kollwitz: Woman and Artist* (Old Westbury, New York: The Feminist Press, 1976)
3. Klipstein, Dr. August von, *Käthe Kollwitz Verzeichnis Der Graphischen Werkes*. (Bern: Klipstein & Co., Vormal's Gutekunst & Klipstein, 1955)
4. Lederer, Herbert (Introduction), *A Selection of Prints by Käthe Kollwitz from The Landauer Collection of The William Benton Museum of Art*, (Storrs, Conn: The University of Connecticut Foundation, 1975)
5. Lein, Malcolm E. (Prologue), *An Exhibition of Graphic Works by Käthe Kollwitz from the Permanent Collection of The Minnesota Museum of Art...* (Saint Paul: Minnesota Museum of Art, 1973)
6. Zigrosser, Carl (Introduction), *Prints and Drawings of Käthe Kollwitz*, (New York: Dover Publications, Inc. 1951)

## EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

Unless otherwise mentioned the prints in this exhibition are *Re-strikes*, impressions printed after the original edition is no longer available. The re-strike is pulled from the original plate that has usually been altered or re-worked by someone other than the artist or original printer to compensate for worn lines on the printing surface. Therefore, these impressions (in most cases posthumous) are generally more heavily inked and have less subtle gradation of tone when compared to an original impression pulled by the artist or someone under the artist's supervision. Re-strikes are available for a moderate price as compared to the cost of an original print.

1. *Self Portrait* 1912  
Original etching and soft ground  
Given by Ruth Armon
2. *Self Portrait at the Table* 1893  
Etching
3. *Mourning Man* 1919  
Etching
4. *Woman with Bowed Head* 1905  
Etching

### *THE WEAVER'S REVOLT* 1897-1898

This series of prints is based on the social protest drama of the same title by Gerhart Hauptmann. This play was concerned with the 1840 Silesian Weavers Revolt against the introduction of mechanical looms into the craftsman's cottage industry.

5. *Storming* 1897  
Etching
6. *The End* 1898  
Etching

7. *Four Men in the Inn* for the theme "Conspiracy" 1892-93  
Etching and aquatint



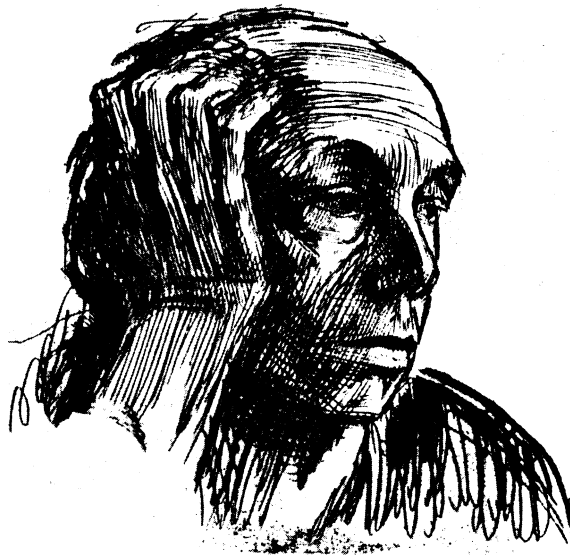
8. *March of the Weavers* 1897  
Etching

*PEASANT WAR SERIES* 1903-08

This series is based on Gerhart Hauptmann's play, "Florian Geyer." This drama concerns the sixteenth century Peasant Rebellion, a violent and tragic episode in German history. As Zigrosser points out, women are the protagonists in seven prints, and this fact reflects Kollwitz's concept of women as both leaders of events and as tragic survivors.

9. *Plowmen* 1906  
Etching and aquatint

10. *The Assault* 1903  
Etching
11. *Mother with a Child on her Arm* 1910  
Etching
12. *Whetting the Scythe* 1905  
Etching and soft-ground technique
13. *After the Battle* 1921  
Etching on soft-ground



14. *Self-Portrait* 1921  
Etching
15. *Death, Woman and Child*  
Etching



16. *Self-Portrait*, (half length in profile) 1938  
Lithograph  
Printed posthumously and signed by the artist's son, Hans
17. *Mother Feeding Child* 1932  
Etching



18. *The Call of Death* 1934-35  
Lithograph  
Printed and signed by the artist's son, Hans Kollwitz
19. *Self Portrait While Drawing* 1933  
Reproduction of charcoal drawing
20. *Self-Portrait* 1936  
Bronze
21. *William Patterson* (1941- ) American  
Käthe Kollwitz  
Etching